

minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, that old question remains relevant: Are you better off today than you were 4 years ago?

Under this Republican Congress and the Bush administration, there is no doubt that people in Silicone Valley are not better off. At home, one in three households has had a layoff since Bush took office. In January, 2001, the unemployment rate in San Jose was 1.6 percent. In April of this year, it was 6.2 percent.

Across the country, the average length of unemployment is the highest in 20 years. The overall job picture is the worst in nearly 40 years.

The truth is, House Republicans do not have a real plan. Instead, they are launching a public relations offensive ironically titled Hire Our Workers, HOW.

Yes, Americans want to know "how" Republicans can explain the loss of 2.2 million American jobs. "How" can Republicans think today's sham job training bill will help the 443,000 Californians who were laid off just last month?

Democrats have a proven track record of creating 22 million jobs in the nineties. Now Americans want a change in direction, not more votes on the same tired, gimmick proposals.

IBM WORKING TOWARD LIFELONG LEARNING

(Mr. CARTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, lifelong learning is very important to the competitiveness of this country. I would like to highlight what IBM, a company with a very strong presence in my district, is doing for lifelong learning.

When I visited IBM's Austin site recently, I learned about several programs that IBM has which promote science and math for children. The company's Young Explorer is an interactive apparatus that young children have to access many of the schools in districts around the country. It targets kids up to age 8. By making science and math fun, IBM hopes that these children will decide to go into areas of science and math.

IBM also runs the Excite Science Camp For Girls at 38 U.S. sites during the summer months. Such camps give seventh and eighth grade girls the opportunity to meet with IBM female engineers, design and build their own Web sites, and hopefully come to realize that engineering is a viable career option for them.

IBM has collaborative relationships with many colleges and universities. The company and students share resources and work together on research and development endeavors. The company also goes into the community and offers computer training.

IBM has the right idea. We need to create initiatives for U.S. employees to build new skills in today's global economy. If we do not, U.S. workers will get left behind.

EX-FELON VOTING RIGHTS BILL

(Ms. CARSON of Indiana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say that we have celebrated for veterans during the Memorial Day weekend in a very proper and respectful way.

Last evening, I introduced legislation that would correct an inequity for our veterans. Many would be surprised to learn that veterans who have served honorably in the United States military who have been discharged honorably, who subsequently, because of posttraumatic stress disorder, find themselves within the walls of prisons on a felony conviction, when they are released after they have served their time, Mr. Speaker, many of them in certain States are denied the right to vote.

Disenfranchisement of those who jeopardized their lives in our defense of democratic ideas is an offense to the conscience of our Nation. Denying veterans who committed a crime and served their sentences the right to vote is unconscionable.

This bill would give liberty and justice for all people, Mr. Speaker, especially for our veterans. I would encourage every Member of the House who respects and loves and honors the veterans of this Nation to sign on as a sponsor of this legislation.

PUTTING PROFIT BEFORE PATRIOTISM MUST END

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, time and again companies like Accenture have abused loopholes in the Tax Code to shirk their duties to the United States. They incorporate on paper in countries like Bermuda for the express purpose of avoiding U.S. taxes. There is no justification in today's world for this shameful practice, none.

Accenture also outsources jobs. Now we learn that the Department of Homeland Security has given Accenture a record \$10 billion contract, I assume with the blessing of this majority, which has done everything in its power to allow this practice to continue, including watering down a provision that I authored to prohibit these companies from contracting with the Department of Homeland Security. I remind my colleagues that this House passed that provision by a vote of 318 to 110, with the other body following suit.

So when I hear some actually defend this practice, I think, tell that to the

families of those men and women who have given their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan. Tell them that their loved ones gave their lives defending the right of multinational corporations to cheat the American taxpayer, because that is what they are doing.

The time for putting profit before patriotism has passed. That is what these folks are doing. Rewarding companies who have abandoned our country with government contracts, as this administration is continuing to do, is not only unpatriotic, it is immoral. It should end.

SENIORS OF AMERICA DESERVE BETTER PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE

(Ms. KILPATRICK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, the seniors of America deserve better. This Republican House and Republican Senate, as well as the President, have passed a Medicare bill at 3 in the morning that is a sham on seniors.

Our seniors need and want lower prescription prices. This bill did nothing to lower prices. Medicare negotiates for lower prices for the bulk of the 40 million Americans who need assistance. This bill does not allow our seniors to go to Canada, where medicines cost two-thirds less than what they are in America.

Finally, there is the discount card that is not a discount. Seniors, if you have a discount from a pension plan from yourself or your husband, it is going to be better than this one. Use it.

Mr. Speaker, this is a sham on our seniors. Our seniors deserve more. They built our country. Let us do better. Help them get their medicines. They need them to survive.

RECOUPING MONEY STOLEN BY ENRON

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, it is high time for the Bush administration to take action to recoup the hundreds of millions of dollars that the Enron energy trading racket stole from people in the State of Washington.

We have now heard the tapes, the smoking guns, where energy traders talk about "jamming" grandmothers in Washington State, saying "burn, baby, burn," during the brownouts, just laughing at the fact that they got away with hundreds of millions of dollars of theft.

We are calling on the administration to stop protecting the Enron energy trading racket. We will offer on the floor of the House next week an amendment to compel the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to get off the dime and get our money back from Enron.

This is a ripoff that is too obvious even for the Bush administration to ignore, and it is time for Congress to stand up on our hind legs and force this administration to take action. The people in Snohomish County deserve their hundreds of millions of dollars back, and we are going to see to it that they get it.

AARP AND THE DRUG BILL

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, AARP owes every senior an explanation. Its leader trumpeted a Republican prescription drug bill passed in the dead of night last year. It would have been dead on arrival if the administration had told the truth, but they did not.

But the seniors, including my 94-year-old mother, are really smart. So AARP, when they sent out 26,000 packets of information, only 400 signed up.

My mother and her buddies are pretty darn smart. They know the difference between a real deal and a raw deal. The administration gave seniors a raw deal, and AARP leadership helped.

Senator KERRY will give seniors a real deal with real benefits for prescription drugs.

□ 1100

Democrats are ready to do what is right, beginning with telling the truth.

It is time AARP repudiated the reckless endorsement of a Republican bill that is bad medicine for seniors. It is time for AARP to take the medicine every mother teaches her child: tell the truth and take responsibility when you do something stupid.

BUSH TAX CUTS CAUSE LARGEST DEFICIT IN NATION'S HISTORY

(Mr. ROSS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, in my home State of Arkansas, nearly 75,000 people are out of work today. Unemployment has increased by 19 percent in the last 3½ years.

However, our Nation's Treasury Secretary John Snow is visiting Arkansas today to talk about how President Bush's tax policy reforms are actually creating jobs in Arkansas. All the President's tax cuts for the wealthy have given us is the largest deficit ever in our Nation's history, tax cuts that our children will be forced to pay.

For Secretary Snow to come to Arkansas today and tell Arkansans the administration's economic plan is creating jobs shows a blatant disregard for what Arkansas families are really facing. Working families do not need more rhetoric; they need jobs, they need affordable health care, they need a real Medicare prescription drug plan and,

yes, they need lower gasoline prices, all things this administration has failed to do.

ALLOWING SENIORS ACCESS TO DRUG REIMPORTATION

(Mr. SANDLIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, the new drug discount card is nothing more than the old bait and switch. The Republican leadership continues to try to trick our seniors into thinking they are getting a Medicare prescription drug benefit, while in reality offering nothing more than an 18-month sham program that fails to offer any significant savings to seniors. Not surprisingly, this temporary program prioritizes the pharmaceutical companies' profit over the health care expenses of our Nation's seniors.

While the administration has claimed that these cards will have savings ranging from 10 percent to 25 percent, there is no guarantee of this; and there is absolutely no control over the prices charged.

Additionally, the drug companies determine what drugs to discount and how much seniors pay. And while seniors are locked into a drug card for a full year, the drug companies are at liberty to change what discounts they offer from week to week. As a matter of fact, some have already changed their drug prices so that it does not cut into their bottom line.

The truth is that a better solution with real benefits is available. With drug costs increasing at 3.5 times the rate of inflation, we owe it to our Nation's seniors to finally allow them access to drug reimportation.

It is time to do the right thing and offer real savings to our seniors. We cannot afford not to do so.

2006 BUDGET CUTS

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, last week we learned from an internal Bush administration budget memo detailing their planned cuts.

According to the budget document, education, transportation, Social Security, the Environmental Protection Agency, National Science Foundation, and the Small Business Administration are all in line for drastic cuts in their budgets. Head Start, for example, a \$177 million cut. The National Institutes of Health would be slashed by more than \$600 million. The administration is planning cuts for 2006; and all the while, they are asking for an additional \$25 billion to rebuild and secure Iraq. The additional \$25 billion for Iraq is on top of the \$165 billion the American taxpayers have already allocated and paid.

These reconstruction funds are building schools, roads, and encouraging business development in Iraq; and all the while, we are making corresponding cuts here at home. I understand that we need to rebuild Iraq and Afghanistan, but not at the expense of what we do here in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, when President Bush in 2000 declared his opposition to nation-building, who knew it was America he was talking about.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INFORMING SENIORS ABOUT MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, as many know, for deeply held philosophical reasons, I opposed the creation of a prescription drug entitlement in Medicare. But I never opposed helping low-income seniors or using the private sector to give seniors more buying power to save money on their prescription drugs, which is exactly what became available this week with the new Medicare drug discount card and the \$600 credit for low-income seniors. In fact, I hosted five Medicare discount drug fairs across my district, speaking to more than 1,000 of my constituents.

While many have made speeches on this floor and across the country creating anxiety about this new bill, I found it instructive to spend time with seniors. Despite my opposition to a drug entitlement, I felt I had a moral obligation to explain to seniors, particularly low-income seniors, what is available as of this week in the new Medicare drug discount card benefit.

I urge all of my colleagues, regardless of your view of this legislation, to view what is available in this law and to discharge your duty to your constituents to make knowledge available of the new drug discount card and the low-income assistance for seniors.

BACK TO WORK INCENTIVE ACT OF 2003

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 656, I call up the bill (H.R. 444) to amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to establish a Personal Reemployment Accounts grant program to assist Americans in returning to work, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Pursuant to House Resolution 656, the bill is considered read for amendment.

The text of H.R. 444 is as follows:

H.R. 444

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE

This Act may be cited as the "Back to Work Incentive Act of 2003".